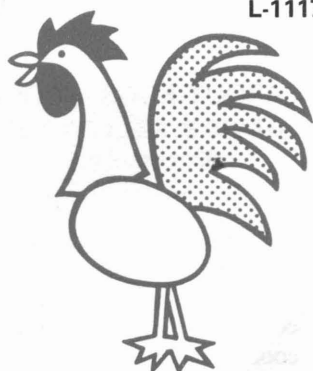


About Eggs...



10-1-73

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COOKING IN THE SHELL

The Texas A&M University System
 Texas Agricultural Extension Service
 J.E. Hutchison, Director
 College Station, Texas

ABOUT EGGS — COOKING IN THE SHELL

DAVID B. MELLOR AND MARSHALL M. MILLER

Extension Poultry Marketing Specialists

The Texas A&M University System

In a world-famous treasury of recipes, nearly 100 are for soft-cooked and poached eggs which can be used interchangeably. As with poached eggs, eggs cooked in the shell must be of the highest quality and cooked at the right temperature for the proper length of time. They may be served soft-cooked, in varying degrees of softness from a runny yolk and barely jelled white to “eggs mollet”, with a tender firm white and semi-soft yolk. Hard-cooked eggs may be served hot or cold, whole, quartered, sliced or diced. They may be pickled or stuffed, used as a basic recipe ingredient or served as a garnish.

Eggs hard or soft-cooked in the shell sound more appetizing than when described by the outmoded terms “hard” or “soft boiled.” And they *are* more appetizing because hard or soft-cooked eggs are *never* boiled. They are cooked at a temperature just below the boiling point, 185 to 194 degrees F., only long enough to get the desired firmness.

Cooking at high temperatures or too long at any temperature causes the protein of egg white to shrink, lose moisture and become rubbery. Overcooking an egg in the shell produces hard spots in the yolk and often turns the yolk green-gray. This discoloration is caused by chemical reaction of the iron in the yolk with hydrogen sulfide from the sulfur in the white. Placing cooked eggs immediately into cold water helps prevent this discoloration.

The fresher eggs are, the harder they are to peel.¹ The following suggestions in the “how to’s” may be helpful for your hard cooked *for peeling* eggs.

HOW TO COOK EGGS IN THE SHELL

Equipment:

- Saucepan big enough for the number of eggs you wish to cook at one time and deep enough for water to be at least 1 inch above eggs.

- Pan or bowl of warm water.

- Long-handled spoon.

For one serving, you will need two high-quality eggs.

¹

Research has shown that hard cooking *for peeling* is the exception to the rule of using as fresh an egg as possible.

SOFT-COOKED EGGS

1. Place cold or room temperature eggs in pan or bowl of warm water to warm them. This helps prevent cracked shells when the eggs are placed in hot water.

2. Bring water in saucepan to rapid boiling, using enough water to come 1 inch above the eggs.

3. Transfer eggs from warm water to boiling water with a spoon.

4. Reduce heat to keep water below simmering and hold for 4 to 14 minutes depending on taste.

5. Cool eggs promptly in cold water to prevent further cooking and to make them easier to handle. Be careful not to chill.



You may choose the way you like your eggs cooked in the shell. From this photo and the description in the text, plus a little practice, you should have perfect eggs for each member of your family every time.

To Serve

Break shell through middle with a knife. With a teaspoon, scoop egg out of each half shell into individual serving dish. If egg cup is used, slice off large end of egg with knife and eat egg from shell.

Timing

If cold eggs are placed in warm water and then held in simmering water, the following descriptions of

eggs may serve as a guide in cooking time.

- 4 minutes - Albumen white and fairly firm, yolk still liquid.
- 6 minutes - Albumen cooked, yolk cooked slightly, mostly still liquid.
- 8 minutes - Albumen cooked, yolk partly cooked, almost firm.
- 10 minutes - Albumen cooked, yolk firm but not solid.
- 12 minutes - Albumen cooked, yolk cooked but still dark in center.
- 14 minutes - Albumen and yolk completely cooked.
- 16 minutes - Hard-cooked egg.

HARD-COOKED EGGS (For Peeling)

1. To simplify peeling, age eggs at room temperature for 24 hours before cooking. Place eggs in normal position (small end down) during this period.

2. Place room-temperature eggs in warm water to prevent cracked shells.

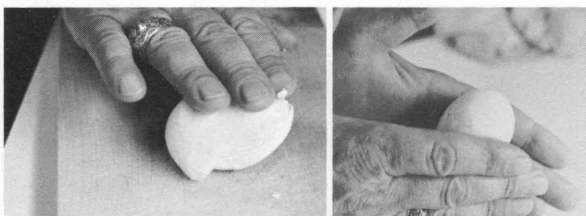
3. Bring water in saucepan to rapid boiling, using enough water to be 1 inch above eggs.

4. Transfer eggs from warm water to boiling water with spoon.

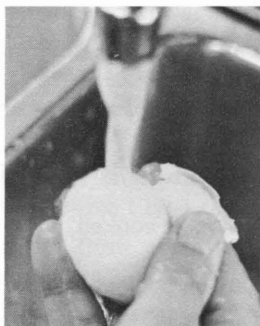
5. Reduce heat to keep water below simmering and hold for 20 minutes.

6. Cool eggs promptly and thoroughly in cold water. This makes the shells easier to remove and helps prevent dark surface on yolks.

7. Remove shell by crackling (tapping gently all over); roll egg between hands to loosen shell; then peel, starting at large end. Holding the egg under cold running water or dipping in a bowl of water helps to ease off the shell.



The shell may be crackled easily by rolling it between two hands after first tapping the shell on kitchen counter or drainboard.



Running water helps to remove the shell after it has been cracked.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

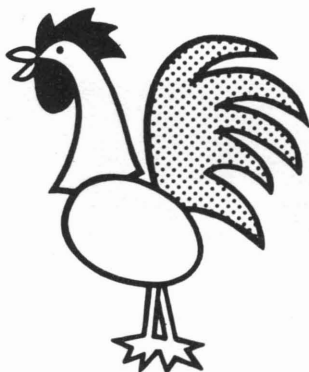
- Eggs also may be cooked in a false shell or egg coddler. An egg coddler is a thick porcelain cup with a metal top which takes the place of the shell. An individual egg is placed in the buttered cup to which salt, pepper, and other seasonings may be added. The cap is screwed on and the cup lowered into simmering water for soft or hard cooking.

- Cook eggs in the shell at a temperature just below the boiling point of water, 185 to 194 degrees F., long enough to get the desired firmness.

- Use only clean, sound eggs; Grades Fresh Fancy, AA or A for eggs cooked in the shell.

- To avoid the gray-green discoloration of egg yolks, avoid overcooking and plunge immediately into cold water.

- The fresher the egg, the harder it may be to peel.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This leaflet and all in a series of nine were adapted from "Eggs - Basic Information for Young Homemakers," American Egg Board, and other sources.

Kitchen and facilities of the Medallion Room, Bryan Utilities, were used for photographic work by permission of Mrs. Willie Belle Bogard, home service director.

Extension foods and nutrition specialists reviewed this leaflet and provided helpful suggestions.

EGGS have a fascinating history. They are among the most versatile of all foods and are said to have a thousand uses. History reveals that eggs were a food delicacy in ancient and biblical times and a staple food wherever abundant.

Ancient people considered eggs as a sacred symbol, and they believed an egg represented the world and its elements: shell, (earth); whites, (water); yolk, (fire); and under the shell (air). The breaking of eggs was a ceremony and a means of foretelling events. Men of early times hung eggs in Egyptian temples of worship. Artists glorified them in paintings and sculpture. Today eggs are still used for decorative purposes — as in Christmas and Easter ornaments and egg shell mosaics.

This series of leaflets numbered L-1114 — L-1122, covers topics of egg quality, buying and storing, six basic methods of egg preparation and eggs in the diet. Each is available from your local Extension agents.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic levels, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

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